



KNIGHTS COURIER



NE KofC Newsletter
Fall 2026 Vol. 54 Issue 3

State Deputy
Michael "Schaef" Schaeffer

Leadership Training Seminar Fraternity, Learning and Opportunities



On Saturday and Sunday, July 11th and 12th, Nebraska held its Leadership Training Seminar at the Holiday Inn in Kearney.

Along with State Deputy, Mike Schaeffer, State Officers, Directors and Chairmen, and District Deputies, representatives of 63 councils attended and set their councils up for continued success in the new Fraternal Year.



The Kearney Council #1728 set the relaxed and fun tone before Friday's evening meetings with a delicious dinner of pork steak, potatoes and watermelon. Their hall was the perfect backdrop for icebreakers and rekindling friendships.

Saturday morning started off with a COR meeting and Hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led by State Chaplain, Fr. Bill Cremers, and Associate



Evangelization and Faith Formation Director, Fr. Justin Fulton, FSC.

This grounded the rest of the weekend in the glory of our Catholic Faith and brought Jesus into the hearts and minds of all attendees, as well as many of their wives.

Building on that foundation, councils and District Deputies then spent the rest of the time being introduced to the members of the State Family and Team and learning about State and Supreme Program and Membership

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Mid-Year Meeting Set for December 4-6

The Mid-Year Meeting is Dec. 4-6, 2026, at the Younes Convention Center in Kearney. It is a chance for District Deputies and the State Membership Team to gather with the State Officers and specific Directors and Chairmen to discuss the State's progress over the first half of the year.

District Deputies will have time to learn about program updates and ways to encourage and support their Councils with growth opportunities.

The Mid-Year Meeting gives District Deputies the opportunity to provide feedback from the Councils they support to State Leadership which allows us to prepare for the second half of the Fraternal Year. All Councils are encouraged to work regularly with your District Deputy, so they are prepared to represent you at this important meeting.

Information on hotel rooms and meal costs will be made available as we get them. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Registration for the Mid-Year Meeting and the festive Ladies Program (see more on page 10) will be through Eventbrite and begin in mid-October and shut down around mid-November. You will be able to register by following this link (<https://kofcmidyear2026.eventbrite.com>) once the site is opened.

Registration instructions will be sent out by State Executive Secretary Mike Vaughn prior to the opening of registration, most likely in early October.

All questions about the registration process should be directed to the State Event Coordinators, Pat Rupp (prupp8@gmail.com or 402-326-3872) and Patrick Dority (bowler224@hotmail.com or 402-326-3872).

Developing Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Hello! As I write this article, I have just returned from the Supreme Convention in Denver. It was truly an inspiring time to connect with brother Knights and their families, pray together in the Mass, and celebrate all that God is doing through the Knights.

A key aspect of our prayer together was the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion has been important to the Knights throughout the past few years with the pilgrim icon, introduction of the COR initiative, and encouragement for families to enthrone an image of the Sacred Heart in their homes. This summer, the devotion has taken a new importance, as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops consecrated our country to Jesus's Sacred Heart in June. The Knights were also instrumental in bringing first class relics of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque to the United States. For me, it was a blessing to be present in New Haven in June when the relics first arrived and were at our State Deputy and Chaplain Mass and then to have concluded the summer with the relics present at our Supreme Convention Mass.

Why is this devotion so crucial for our times? Today, many people might tend to see God as distant, abstract, or even non-existent. The wounds our world continues to suffer have only increased in recent years with violence, division, and rebellion against God's design. Our own hearts are hurting, as is evidenced by the increased rates of mental illness, addiction, and suicide. However, we know that all is not lost. In fact, there has been a revival of faith taking place in recent

years, and I believe the Sacred Heart devotion powerfully portrays that Jesus is close to us, offering us His very Heart. Amid a world of artificial intelligence and screens, Jesus reminds us of the reality of His tender and merciful love, breaking our own hearts open to His love and purpose. The image powerfully portrays this love as Jesus shows us the wounds on His heart that have been redeemed in love.

When Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary, he told her, "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much but is very little loved." This invitation resonates in our hearts to return all the love we have to Him, which we express through our mercy and service. In these upcoming weeks, I encourage you to take time to pray with this powerful image and devotion. If you have not done so already, you can enthrone an image of the Sacred Heart in your home; the Knights have a prayer guide for "Enthronement of the Sacred Heart" on their website. I also continue to encourage our councils to implement and sustain COR and to invite all men, especially the younger generations, to meet Jesus in His love. We in Nebraska are truly leading the way when it comes to COR, and I am truly grateful to our leadership for continuing this passionately. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

In Christ,

Fr. Bill Cremers

As of July 1, Associate Pastor of St. Michael, South Sioux City



Heartfelt Gratitude



As my term ends as the 12th Nebraska District Master, I find myself reflecting on the incredible journey we've shared with this magnificent state of Brother Knights, Sir Knights, and families. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life.

When I was selected by the Supreme Knight and Supreme Master as the Nebraska District Master, I spoke with many in the State and felt we needed to add a few changes. We added our first District Friar, Fr. Joshua Brown, FSC, Website Master, SK Mike Vaughn, Financial Secretary, SK Rich Lowery, PSD, Social Media/Facebook, SK Mark Borytsky Jr., Administrator Audrey Borytsky, seven Diocesan Marshal's, degree kits for each diocese, and augmenting the Exemplification Team with members of the hosting assembly. All this toward making our motto Anytime, Anywhere, Any Number successful for our assemblies.

I want to thank those listed above and the following who were part of this change: District Marshal and Exemplification Degree Team Captain SK Shawn Wilke, State Officers, and SK Bob Wolf, then State Deputy my second year, as well as State Deputy SK Mike Schaeffer. Each of you helped make Nebraska and the 4th Degree truly "One State-One Knight." A special thank you goes to Former District Masters: SK Rich Lowery, SK Jim Haiar, SK Don Ferneding, SK Howard Gaffney and deceased SK Bob Ostidiek. You were always there providing

advice and attending events when asked. The dedication of our Exemplification Degree Team and assemblies to countless Degrees was invaluable as we steered Nebraska in surpassing each of the four years for consistent growth. Thank you all.

I have had the privilege of working alongside some of the most talented and dedicated Brother Knights and Sir Knights. You are the heartbeat of this Order. Your commitment is the driving force behind every success we've achieved. We transformed ideas into reality, turned obstacles into opportunities, and built a culture rooted in Patriotism, collaboration, and excellence.

I look forward to September 1, 2026, supporting our new District Master SK Matt Richardson and ask you to join in welcoming him and his family. I have every confidence that the next District Master will achieve even greater heights, because the foundation we've built together is strong.

Thank you all for your trust and your belief in our shared vision of "Patriotism." It has been an honor to be your District Master and an even greater honor to know you.

God Bless,

Mark Borytsky, PSD, FDM
402-212-9612 cell, mborytsky@cox.net



Early Is Easy!

Worthy Brother Knights,

I hope your new fraternal year has started off strong. For those who attended our July 11th-12th Summer Leadership Training Seminar in Kearney, it was a fantastic weekend of learning, fellowship, and fraternity.

During that meeting, I restated my goals for our Jurisdiction: 1.) increase our Seminarians and those seeking Religious Life – implement COR; 2.) grow our Order – be a “culture of invitation;” 3.) expand our charitable outreach – increase council programs; and 4.) get 50% of our 165 active Councils Safe Environment compliant. WE CAN DO THIS and the State Team is ready to help. I borrowed these three concepts from our Supreme Regional Growth Specialist Br. Tom Kato:

“EARLY IS EASY” – Get everything done early: 1.) Forms 185/365/1295; 2.) Safe Environment Training; 3.) Church Drives and CUF Degrees; 4.) Encourage both associate and insurance members to meet with their Field Agent; and 5.) Council Programs.

“IMMEDIATELY” – In the Gospel of Mark, the word “immediately” appears 41 times. In the Gospel of Matthew, 10 times. We need to act now and not wait. Jesus set out the expectation to get things done as quickly as possible. We should follow his example.

“NUNC COEPI” – Now I begin. Yesterday is done, today is a new day. Learn from the past, correct for the future,

live today as a new day. Nunc Coepi!

Last quarter (April – June), we saw solid growth in membership through a joint effort by our District Deputies/Grand Knights and our General Agents/Field Agents. Our highly rated insurance and fraternal benefits serve the needs of every Catholic man and his family. We surpassed 27,000 Nebraska Knights last April, and by our December 2026 Mid-Year Meeting, I know we can increase that number to 27,500 by simply extending an invitation to that man and his family that you see in church every weekend.

I just returned from the 144th Supreme Convention in Denver, hopefully you were able to watch the three amazing daily Masses on EWTN. The first Mass was celebrated by NE’s own Archbishop Golka, the new Archbishop of Denver. Our Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly closed the convention with these words, “invite every Catholic man to join the Knights of Columbus, not for numbers, but to bring that man **“closer to Christ....”**

I am truly blessed to call you all Brother Knights. I look forward to seeing you at this Fall’s regional meetings. St. Matthew the Evangelist, Pray for us!

Vivat Jesus,

Mike “Schaefer” Schaeffer
State Deputy



Legislative Corner

I’ve always taken pride and consolation in the Knights of Columbus core pillar of patriotism. As Supreme Knight Kelly stated in his recent *Columbia* column, “patriotism is not a mere sentiment.” He further stated it is not “blind allegiance or political partisanship.”

Instead, the pillar of patriotism is “rightly ordered gratitude” and the “duty of allegiance we owe our nation in recognition of the blessings we have received—gratitude to God and gratitude for a country that has allowed so many good things to flourish: our families, our Church, our councils and our communities.”

Close to these thoughts are those of Cardinal Jean Danielou, who once wrote in 1967: “I have no liking for Christians who will not touch the facts of human existence for fear of soiling their hands. The Christians who struggle to make Christianity effective in the world, even at the cost of painful blows, those I admire.” He continues: “I love that Church which plunges into the thickets of human history and is not afraid of compromising itself by getting mixed up with men’s affairs, with their political conflicts

and their cultural disputes.”

As we approach the upcoming election cycle, let’s keep these thoughts in mind. It can be easy to shrug aside electoral politics, to think they are dirty, pointless, or even meaningless. Instead, election season should be seen as an important opportunity to exercise our commitment to patriotism. It’s a chance to show gratitude for the system of government we have been given by our forefathers.

We can also use the opportunity to evangelize to our fellow community members the importance of patriotism during a time of election. Too often participation in elections can be abysmally low or lower than it should be. But we—as trusted members of our community—can encourage people to be informed, be prayerful, and make good decisions at the ballot.

Tom Venzor
Executive Director
NE Catholic Conference



The Pilgrim Icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

We are excited to announce the return of the Pilgrim Icon program, featuring the magnificent **Sacred Heart of Jesus**. These beautiful icons continue their special journey, traveling throughout Nebraska to every Council.

This is a unique opportunity for our entire brotherhood to participate in a powerful act of faith and veneration. The icon is a reproduction of the revered 1767 masterpiece by Italian artist Pompeo Batoni, which is permanently housed at the Church of the Gesù in Rome. Each reproduction carries the Apostolic Blessing of Pope Francis, making it a truly blessed object for our communities.

Our goal is simple but profound: to promote the veneration of and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Councils receiving an icon are asked to host a **Holy Hour of Veneration** or similar program. This is not just an event, but it is a time for solemn prayer and reflection, inviting all Brother Knights, their families, and the wider parish community to join together in devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Comprehensive booklets containing the details of the Holy Hour service will accompany each icon, providing the framework for a reverent and meaningful experience. Additionally, for more information and resources, please visit Supreme's Pilgrim Icon website at <https://www.kofc.org/en/what-we-do/faith-in-action-programs/faith/pilgrim-icon.html>. Mark Borytsky, PSD, FDM, State Community Director can answer any questions relating to the State Pilgrim Icon journey, mborytsky@cox.net or 402-212-9612.

Let's seize this opportunity to deepen our faith and share the love of Christ with our communities. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a symbol of God's boundless love for us. By hosting these Holy Hours, we not only fulfill a core tenet of our Order's mission but also become instruments of that love, extending a personal invitation to others to encounter Christ.

We look forward to seeing the icons travel across Nebraska and the spiritual blessings that will follow. Councils will be contacted regarding the route and additional information will be posted on the State website.



Be sure to follow the Nebraska Knights of Columbus on Facebook, Instagram and X and at www.nebraskakofc.org

Keep Christ in Christmas Program

We are in full gear for 2026 Keep Christ in Christmas this year. Same as last year, you can order these items online at the link below.

Preliminary highlights are that suppliers are the same: Catholic Prayer Cards, LLC, for English cards and stocking stuffers; and Christ in Christmas, LLC for multicultural Christmas cards and promotional items.

Councils can use online orders for Catholic Prayer Cards, LLC. Christ in Christmas orders must use the paper form found online or provided at the July meeting to mail with checks (payable to Knights of Columbus) to Faith Director, Mark Main, 808 Karen Dr., Lincoln, NE 68522.

Any additional questions you can reach Mark Main at 402-416-6458 or markmain65@gmail.com
<https://form.jotform.com/260964756537168>



Mark and Julie Main
State Faith Directors



State and Supreme Per Capita Due NOW

I just returned from the 144th Knights of Columbus Supreme Convention in Denver, and WOW!!!, What an experience! From the first day, exchanging lapel pins with brothers from all over the United States and several different countries to the moving closing Mass, everything was amazing.

The highlight for me was the opening Mass Tuesday morning. The first thing that impressed me was the opening music by the Choir and Brass Ensemble of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The procession included many in the Fourth Degree Honor Guard, followed by well over one hundred priests and sixty Bishops from around the world. That was followed by the fantastic homily from the Archbishop of Denver, the Very Reverend James Golka, a Nebraska native. He spoke of growing up in Grand Island, and his dad's influence on his faith and the role the Knights of Columbus played in his faith formation. The Nebraska pride continued the following day when the principal celebrant for the Mass was Blase Cardinal Cupich, who grew up in South Omaha.

I hope you all can attend a Supreme Convention sometime

to feel the brotherhood from around the United States and the world. It will make you even prouder to be a Knight. Blessed Michael McGivney's vision for the Order is alive and strong in the actions of every Knight of Columbus.

Now, down to business and the State Per-Capita July billing. Remember, your council will receive a state per-capita bill and will also receive a Supreme per-capita bill. Both bills must be paid. When I left for convention, I received payments from 64 councils, which is a strong showing. The July billing was emailed from Executive Secretary Mike Vaughn on July 1st and is due to the State Secretary by September 1, 2026. If you can't find that email or simply need another, email me (below), and I will get you another copy. My goal is to have every Council's state per-capita paid by the due date.

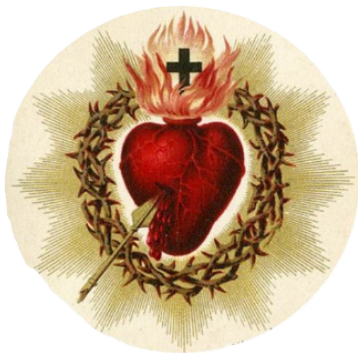
Vivat Jesus,

Don Hypse, State Secretary
402-369-0814

hypse2729@gmail.com



COR - A Place for Every Catholic Man to Grow



We recently celebrated the feast of our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, a true parish priest. He also understood family life and how important father, mother and faith were to keep the family together.

When he was 13, he joined his father in the brass factory

to help support his family and to save money to go to the seminary. At 21, he returned home to take care of his mother and siblings after the sudden death of his father. He returned to the Seminary and was ordained a Priest on December 22, 1877, and celebrated his first Mass on Christmas Day of that same year in his home parish, St. Mary's, in Hartford. At 30 years old, he was assigned as Pastor of St Mary's, where he served up until he was assigned to St. Thomas parish in Thomaston. It was there while ministering to his parishioners and others during a flu pandemic that he became ill and died on August 14, 1890.

Is it any wonder that Fr. McGivney sympathized with the plight of families, especially Catholic families, who lost their father and husband and had to face the courts and being sent to homes where their faith was despised? He knew that families needed protection, both financially and spiritually, in order to survive.

Fr. McGivney, through his love of God, and for his people,

knew that he needed to find a way to support families so that they could stay together and grow in their faith.

As he formed the Knights of Columbus in the basement of St. Mary's Church, he planted a vision for our Order that stands over 2 million men strong today. Our financial support for families is beyond compare and our love of God and the Catholic church is being re-invigorated through our Evangelization and Faith Formation program and specifically through our COR initiative.

Through COR, we have the opportunity and the ability to give every Catholic man a place to build fellowship, grow in their faith, and develop a prayer life that can bring them closer to our Lord Jesus while becoming better fathers, better husbands and better faith leaders for their families, their parishes and their communities.

Each of our Good Bishops in Nebraska understand how important COR is to build up the domestic Church and through that growth building up our parishes and diocese to stand tall in a world where Christian values are derided.

If your council has not already done so, start today to establish COR and provide the safety, stability, and faith opportunities that every Catholic man deserves.

May God Bless you and your family and may He grant you success in your efforts.

Vivat Jesus!

Richard Lowery, PSD, FDM
Evangelization and Faith Formation Director



Regional Meetings



Nebraska ended with a strong 4th quarter of inviting men to become Knights of Columbus through pointing the candidates and their families to Jesus Christ.

We desire to sustain that culture of invitation by starting the fraternal year with the same commitment of

engaging in the conversations that turn into invitations.

We enjoyed the engagement at the summer Leadership Training Seminar and look forward to connecting directly with local councils during the regional meetings.

Every council is encouraged to conduct the New Church Drive and host a Charity, Unity, and Fraternity (CUF) exemplification. Early is Easy. Presenters will provide information and look forward to interactive dialogue regarding Membership, COR, Programs, 4th Degree, etc.

As we go about our days and our upcoming events, please encourage every member of your council to utilize e-membership every hour of the day to invite men to become Knights.

It is also a great place to review your council Prospect Tab in preparation for the CUF exemplification.

Below is the listing of regional meetings. I pray we saw you, or will see you, at any one of the below regional meetings. Remember, any member of your council is welcome to attend and learn more about our amazing Order.

Lastly, the State team is ready to conduct a CUF degree exemplification after each of the meetings.

- 8 August - Region 4, Theisen Hall, St. Michaels, Hastings
- 9 August - Region 2, Pope John Central Catholic High School, Elgin
- 15 August - Region 1, St. Michael's Catholic Church, Lincoln
- 22 August - Region 6, KofC Hall, Scottsbluff
- 23 August - Region 5, St. Catherine Parish Hall, Indianola
- 12 September - Region 3, Norfolk
- 19 September - Region 7/8, St. Vincent de Paul, Omaha

God Bless,
Rob Ostdiek, State Membership Director
rob.ostdiek1989@gmail.com



Nebraska McGivney Foundation

During 2026, the McGivney Foundation transferred our funds to the Knights of Columbus Asset Management team in New Haven, CT. As of June 30, 2026, the fund balance has grown to \$938,846.24.

Thank you to the 11 councils and 18 individuals who donated to the foundation this last fiscal year.

We were able award three grants totaling \$5,000. The recipients were incredibly grateful for the assistance and support.

Contributions of any size can be sent to: Nebraska McGivney Foundation, P.O. Box 98, Elkhorn, NE 68022.

May God bless you!

Contact one of the Foundation Advisors with questions.

Dan Wells, danielwells5@gmail.com | Don Ferneding, don.ferneding@gmail.com | Ray Guggenberger, rguggenberger@cox.net

State Athletics Report for the Summer of 2026

I hope everyone had a safe summer. The State Golf Tournament will be on September 27, 2026, at the Eagle Hills golf course in Papillion, NE.

We hope everyone will come and enjoy a day of golf and camaraderie. The tournament should be played in about 4 hours and then come to 3019's hall for 12-oz. ribeye steak dinner with all the trimmings

A raffle with well over 200 prizes will take place after dinner, then we will announce the golf winners.

We hope to award over \$4,000 which must be used for vocations or Catholic Education.

We will pay out 2 flights with 2 winners in each flight. The last place team also receives a prize.

If you don't golf, please join us for the dinner. The cost is \$20 per meal. Please see the entry form in this Courier.

Thank you for all your support this year.

Vivat Jesus

Joe Bober
State Athletic Chair/
Special Events Coordinator





Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities

October 11-17, 2026

Helping People with Special Needs

As the summer draws to a close, we start to look ahead to the many activities we enjoy each fall. From football games to trips to the pumpkin patch, we all have activities that bring our families closer at this time of year. One activity to consider adding to your annual list is the Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

Brother Knight and Governor Jim Pillen has once again signed a proclamation declaring the week of October 11-17, 2026, as "Support Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities Week" in the state of Nebraska.

To follow suit, the State Council has designated October 11th to 17th as the official dates for the campaign, but each council is welcome to pick dates based on their availability. We are also fortunate to receive proclamations from many local mayors supporting our event this year.

The 2025 Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities was extremely successful, raising over \$180,000 to support the organizations across the state of Nebraska serving those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

These organizations vary from educational facilities such as Villa Marie and Madonna Ability Alliance to those helping adults with transitional services to learn the skills to make day-to-day life easier and be competitively employed such as MOSAIC, Duet, the Southwest Area Training Services and many others.

Other organizations such as ARC help individuals and families locate and take advantage of the many services available in the state to those who have intellectual disabilities. Places like S.M.I.L.E. Inc, Buckboard Riding Academy and Camp Scott provide therapeutic services and the ability for individuals and families to experience life to its fullest potential and enjoy the recreation that many take for granted. Special Olympics Nebraska, as well as its local chapters, provide athletes with the opportunity to showcase their abilities and compete in local, regional, state and national competitions.

As you can see, a wide variety of programs and services receive support from the Intellectual Disabilities Foundation, but none of this is possible without our councils.

This year we have the goal of raising over \$200,000 through the Campaign with People with Intellectual Disabilities, but for that to happen we need all councils to participate.

This can be through the "traditional" campaign and distributing candy, by hosting a parish breakfast where the proceeds are donated to the Campaign, by partnering with

local businesses to do a "kick back" program, and many other options.

If you have not already done so, please reach out to a local business and schedule a time when the Knights can conduct their drive. Speak with your parish priest about setting up a weekend to hold the drive after Masses.

We are always willing to help come up with ideas to run a Campaign! If the week of October 11-17 does not work for your council to hold your Campaign, please feel free to pick another weekend that works for you locally.

As a reminder, the final report and ALL money collected are due to the Intellectual Disabilities Foundation Directors by January 31, 2027.

All money that a council collects during the drive MUST be submitted to the Foundation. Once the money and report are received, the Foundation will write a check(s) back to the organization(s) each council designates on their report up to 50% of the collected funds.

The remaining 50% is used by the Foundation to provide support for special requests from organizations throughout the state. Any funds that have not been requested back by a council by June 30, 2027, will be forfeited by the council and become part of the Foundations funds.

We are counting on each of you to make the 2026 Campaign for People with Intellectual Disabilities a success. Do not hesitate to include your family and friends.

Growing up, some of my first memories of the Knights of Columbus were helping hand out Tootsie Rolls® with my dad and grandpa. Last year, our sons helped us hand out candy at a local business and collected money after Masses at our local parish.

Allowing your families to be part of the philanthropic experiences that we do as Knights help to create the memories and traditions that will live on for years to come.

Remember that the Knights of Columbus is for the whole family. Use your Campaigns to promote the Knights of Columbus and the work that we do as well as to recruit new prospective members and their families.

If you have any questions, need any assistance with your campaign, or have an idea to conduct a drive that could benefit other councils, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

God Bless you and all you do.

Stephen and Sammi Lowery
Intellectual Disabilities Foundation Directors
402.540.1670 sglowery82@gmail.com



Leadership Training Seminar

Continued from page 1.

opportunities.

Nebraska was blessed to have our Supreme Regional Growth Specialist, Tom Kato, the immediate Past State Deputy of Arizona, attend as our Supreme Representative.

He and other presenters offered great insight into the changes that Supreme has initiated this year, and practical advice on how councils can be successful in the coming year.

Some of the changes that were discussed, included Supreme's Faith in Action program changes, opportunities for growing your council's membership, along with new requirements for Star Council and ICC recognition.

Following Saturday evening's Mass, the State Officers, District Deputies as well as the District and Diocesan Marshals for the 4th Degree were installed in their offices.

Sunday wrapped up a wonderful weekend of Fraternity, learning and conversation. The State Team was glad to hear from many attendees that the information presented will help their council be successful this year and invite all councils to attend next year.



Nebraska Knights of Columbus State Golf Tournament Sunday September 27, 2026 Four Person Scramble



Checkin opens at 7:00 a.m. Shotgun start 8:00 a.m.

Eagle Hills Golf Course, 501 Eagle Hills Drive, Papillion, NE 68133.

\$90.00 per golfer with foursomes encouraged. Open to any Catholic, age 18 and older.

Men 65 and older shoot from seniors' tees; women shoot from red tees.

Includes golf cart and steak dinner at the South Council Hall, 4323 Washington, Omaha, NE
Cocktails 12:30 p.m. Ribeye dinner 1:00 p.m.

Not golfing? Join us for drinks and dinner for just \$20.00 per person.

Make checks to: Knights of Columbus

Mail reservation and check to

Joe Bober

**4070 I Street,
Omaha, NE 68107**

Deadline Sept. 25, 2026

Questions? Call Joe 402-290-7954

Players in Foursome

Name	Address	Phone	Parish

Dinner only



Join Our 2026 Coats for Kids Drive!

Be Part of our 2026 Coats for Kids Drive!

With your help, we can reach more children and families in need throughout our communities. Every coat purchased, donated, or distributed represents more than protection from the cold—it is a reminder that someone cares.

We encourage every council and Brother Knight to support the 2026 Coats for Kids program in whatever way possible. Whether through financial contributions, coat drives, fundraising events, or helping with distribution, every effort can make a meaningful difference.

As Knights, we are called to put our faith into action and serve those most in need. Together, we can ensure that children across Nebraska face the coming winter with warmth, comfort, and hope.

Let us once again demonstrate the power of charity and fraternity by making the 2026 Coats for Kids program our most successful yet!

Mark Your Calendars

Consider joining us at one of these important Coats for Kids locations:

- **Archdiocese of Omaha:** Schuyler - October 17, 2026
- **Diocese of Lincoln:** St. Patrick's School - October 17, 2026
- **Diocese of Grand Island:** More information to follow - October 22, 2026

Whether you donate, purchase coats, volunteer at a distribution location, or help spread the word, your participation can make a lasting difference. Together, let's make 2026 a year of warmth, hope, charity, and fraternity for children throughout Nebraska!

Your Support Warms Lives: How to Donate

To make this year's program our most impactful yet, the State Officers and I are humbly asking for your help with donations to fund this crucial program. Whether your council plans its own drive or not, every contribution makes a difference.

Please consider donating so we can do the most good for children and families in need across Nebraska. If you're able to support this effort, we would appreciate receiving donations by September 20, 2026, but please know that contributions made after this date will still be gratefully accepted and put to good use.

Together, we can help ensure that no child must face the cold Nebraska winter without a warm coat. Thank you, Brother Knights, for your generosity and continued commitment to charity and service.

How to Donate

Please make checks payable to: **Nebraska State Council**
Mail your donation to:

Mark Borytsky, State Community Director

13005 S. 29th Place, Bellevue, NE 68123.

Get Involved: Purchasing Coats & Distributing Locally

For councils looking to purchase coats directly, pre-packs of 12 coats in various sizes are available through knightsgear.com. Please remember that shipping can take several weeks from the date of your order, and payment by credit card is recommended.

Smaller councils, remember that you can team up with other councils in your district or region to purchase cases of coats together. By working together, we can make an even greater impact while helping ensure that every council, regardless of size, has the opportunity to participate.

Once the coats are in hand, the opportunities to distribute them and connect with your community are endless! Work with organizations in your area to identify the children and families who are most in need this winter. Consider partnering with:

- Your local parish or school
- Community centers
- Fire halls or police departments—would be interested in helping with distribution!
- Local charities or family assistance organizations
- Food pantries or homeless shelters

By working together with these community partners, we can make sure our coats reach the children who need them most. Every coat distributed is an opportunity to share warmth, hope, and the charitable spirit of the Knights of Columbus.

Beyond the Coat: Community & Membership

The Coats for Kids program offers far more than just warmth. It is a powerful way to strengthen your council's connection with your parish and the broader community. It is also an opportunity to proudly showcase the good works of the Knights of Columbus, inspiring others to support our mission and perhaps even join our ranks!

Consider setting up an information booth during coat distributions. This can be an ideal membership opportunity for parents and community members to learn more about the Knights of Columbus and the positive impact we have on our parishes and communities.

Let's make 2026 the year that every council in Nebraska participates in this truly impactful program. Together, we can help ensure that no child in our great state goes cold this winter.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at mborytsky@cox.net or 402-212-9612.

God Bless,

Mark Borytsky, PSD, FDM
State Community Director



Membership News and Mid-Year Meeting

We're happy to see utilization of the Church Drive and Charity, Unity, and Fraternity Degree calendars. We hope all councils use both calendars.

The calendars demonstrate commitment. The effort will yield results. Plus, the results are visible in our councils bringing innovative ideas, new energy, and the opportunity for us to learn from and share our faith with new men.

First quarter incentive tracking updates will be published on council, district, and region opportunities. Early is Easy. Every council could realize a benefit from the recognition opportunities.

As we work across Nebraska during the regional meetings, we will answer your questions and take your feedback to State and Supreme for the appropriate consideration.

With that feedback and updated guidance from our leaders, we will prepare an engaging Mid-Year Meeting for our District Deputies the weekend of December 4-6, 2026. All this is working toward preparing councils to finish strong in the second half of the fraternal year.

The State team remains at your disposal to assist you in areas of challenge, or questions, and welcomes the opportunity to interact with you and your councils.

Rob Ostdiek, State Membership Director
rob.ostdiek1989@gmail.com



Angels from Angels Spreading Christmas Cheer to Veterans Ladies Program LTS and MYM



At our July Ladies Program, we came together to make more than 600 angel ornaments that will be distributed to our four local veterans' homes in December.

It was a wonderful opportunity to work together on a meaningful project that will help bring a little extra holiday cheer to the veterans during the Christmas season.

The generosity and dedication of everyone who participated made this outreach a tremendous success.

For our December Ladies Program, we will gather to add the finishing touches to the angels by attaching ribbons and

tags, so they are ready for delivery.

In addition to completing this special project, we will celebrate the season with an ornament exchange while enjoying hot chocolate and Christmas cookies. Be sure to bring a wrapped ornament for the exchange and pre-registering on EventBrite is appreciated.

It will be a fun and festive afternoon filled with fellowship, holiday spirit, and the joy of giving back to our community.

The Knights of Columbus “Keep Christ in Christmas” Poster Contest promotes the true spirit of Christmas in homes, schools, parishes, and communities. We have made the “Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest” the Youth Program’s Keystone Project for the Fraternal Year 2026-2027.

Last year we re-aligned the poster contest with international guidelines. Except for some confusion with the kickoff and administration of the program, the contest went very well.

This allowed our students to create poster masterpieces during the Christmas Season rather than the Thanksgiving Season.

Grade divisions are Kindergarten, grades 1-2, grades 3-4, grades 5-6, and grades 7-8. **The 2024 Entry Form should be used again this year.**

Your council poster contest should be rolled out to your parish youth, during the 1st week of December. Posters should be collected by the council during the week before Christmas.

Posters should be judged at the local council by the Council Officers as soon as feasible. The top 3 posters need to be submitted to your District Deputy.

The District Deputy and a representative from each Council



(Preferably the Grand Knight or Deputy Grand Knight) should judge all entries and advance the top 3 from each District to your respective Regional Growth Director by January 10.

With the help of their respective District Deputies, the Regional Growth Directors should choose the top three entries from each region and submit to the State Youth Chairman by January 31.

With the help of the Regional Growth Directors the State Youth Chairman will advance the top 3 posters for international consideration.

This will be done at a scheduled Regional Meeting held in February 2027.

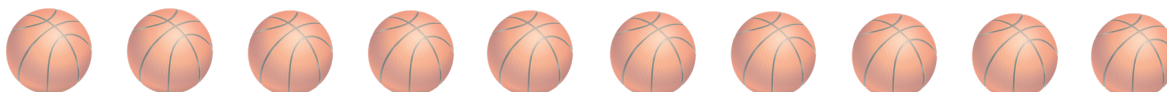
Winning Posters must be submitted to Supreme by the State Youth Chairman by February 28, 2027 to be considered for an International Award.

Gary Groteluschen
State Youth Chairman
garykoc12086@gmail.com



Be sure to follow the Nebraska Knights of Columbus on Facebook, Instagram and X and at **www.nebraskakofc.org**

2027 State Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest



The Youth Free Throw contest is held after the first of the year with local contests. Generally, the council contests are scheduled for January and district competitions are in February, with a Regional Competition in March 2027.

The State Competition is scheduled for Saturday, April

10, 2027, at Grand Island Central Catholic schools in Grand Island.

More information to come. Questions? Contact Gary Groteluschen, State Youth Chairman at garykoc12086@gmail.com



Culture of Life Foundation

Faith in Action: Defending the Dignity of Every Human Life

This is more than an evening out. It is an opportunity to turn our convictions into action—to gather with others who believe that protecting life also means supporting the people and families who need us most.

Putting Faith Into Action

The Knights of Columbus has never been called merely to be an organization of words. From its founding, the Knights has sought to put Catholic principles into practice through charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism.

That mission remains just as important today.

Our pro-life witness begins with prayer. We pray for unborn children, for mothers and fathers facing difficult circumstances, for families experiencing hardship, and for a conversion of hearts throughout our society.

But prayer should lead us to action.

We can pray—and then volunteer.

We can speak for life—and then support a family in need.

We can defend the unborn—and then make sure their mothers know they are not alone.

We can proclaim the dignity of the human person—and then demonstrate that dignity through our own generosity and service.

This is what it means to put faith into action.

Every Life Is Worth Defending

The unborn child has no political voice, no ability to advocate for himself or herself, and no power to demand recognition. That child depends upon others to speak and act on his or her behalf.

But our commitment to human dignity cannot end at birth. The same God-given dignity belongs to the newborn child, the struggling parent, the person with disabilities, the elderly neighbor, and the person approaching the end of life.

The consistent defense of human dignity requires a culture of life that accompanies people throughout their entire journey.

As Knights, we have an opportunity to help create that culture—not through condemnation, but through **truth expressed with charity and charity rooted in truth.**

A Challenge to Every Knight

Each of us can ask a simple question: **What can I do to build a culture of life in my parish, my council, and my**

community?

Perhaps the answer is supporting a local pregnancy resource center. Perhaps it is volunteering with a Catholic charity. Perhaps it is helping a young family who is struggling. Perhaps it is inviting another man to become involved in the Knights. Perhaps it begins with a conversation, a prayer, or an act of kindness that reminds someone that he or she is not alone.

The opportunities are all around us.

The defense of life is not someone else's responsibility. It belongs to all of us.

Let us continue to be men who do not simply talk about our faith but live it. Let us be husbands and fathers who cherish the gift of family. Let us be brothers who stand beside those in need. Let us be neighbors who offer practical help and genuine friendship. And let us be Knights who boldly proclaim, through both our words and our actions, that **every human life is a sacred gift from God and worthy of our protection and love.**

Join us on **October 9, 2026, at St. Robert Bellarmine in Omaha** for the **Faith, Hope and Love Gala**. Bring your family, friends, fellow Knights, and parish community. Gather a table of eight for **\$700**, or attend individually for **just \$75**.

Together, let us put **faith into action, hope into practice, and love at the service of life.**

One family. One child. One act of charity. One faithful Knight at a time.

God bless,

Mike and Mary Conrad
COL Foundation Directors



Be sure to follow the Nebraska Knights of Columbus on Facebook, Instagram and X and at **www.nebraskakofc.org**

2026 State Knights of Columbus Youth Soccer Challenge

Saturday, October 24, 2026



The State Soccer Kick Competition has moved. It will be at the Columbus YMCA Field House (an indoor venue), 3912 38th St., Suite C, Columbus, NE 68601. Registration begins at 10 a.m., with kicking to begin at 11 a.m.

As a state, Nebraska offers this program to boys and girls ages 9 to 14 (based on their age on September 1st). This competition is open to all youth, whether or not they attend a Catholic school.

The contest will be divided into four levels of competition: Council, District, Regional, and State.

State winners will be forwarded on to the Supreme office for consideration at the international level. In 2023 and 2024, Nebraska had an international winner.

The youth chairman is responsible for regional competition medals and state competition trophies. The Youth Chairman does not set district competition or regional dates. Those dates are set by the Grand Knights and District Deputies.

Council competitions should be held between now and September 15, with Districts taking place by the end of September.

Regional competitions should be scheduled for early October.

All the information that you need to run your Council competition can be found in the Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge Kit. Kit and program guide sheets can be ordered at Officers Online. This kit can be ordered by your Grand Knight, Deputy Grand Knight, Council Youth Director, or your Council Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge Chairman, and will be provided to your council free of charge.

If your Council wants to hold a competition, call Gary Groteluschen, State Youth Chairman, at 402-750-8747.

If possible, I will bring the equipment to your competition. All you must have available is a soccer goal. Last year we even made a goal out of baseball backstop.

Gary Groteluschen
State Youth Chairman
garykoc12086@gmail.com



Vocations to Focus on Newman Centers

As summer is slowly ending and fall and the school year begins it's time for the Councils to start thinking about what we can do to help vocations. One event that some Councils do is a St. Andrew dinner. The St. Andrew Dinner is intended to bring men together who are considering a vocation to the Priesthood. It offers a relaxed atmosphere and includes a time for prayer, a meal, and an opportunity to listen while the local Priest talks about his journey to priesthood. It offers a 'no pressure' atmosphere of discussion and dialogue about the life of a priest and a priestly vocation.

These dinners are named after St. Andrew who, in the Gospel according to John, brought his brother Simon Peter to meet Jesus. Reflecting upon the call of St. Andrew and his joyful response, we are reminded that it is our job, as Knights of Columbus, to assist others to discern their vocations. Like Andrew, the Lord is asking us to bring others to Him so that they may also discover their vocation.

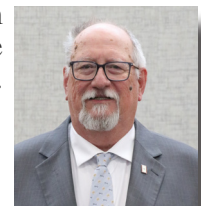
Another excellent way to heighten Vocation awareness is by sponsoring Vocation Awareness Days at Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Make sure first that you contact the school before holding such events. Usually, these events feature displays for students in an auditorium, gym



or gathering place with the local Priest and Brother Knights on hand to answer questions. If the Council does not have a school that they can hold the event at, ask the Parish Priest if you can hold one at the Church before and after the weekend Masses. The Council can contact their Diocesan Vocation office for help and to see if they have any fliers that might be helpful.

Remember that with the start of school we also need to be working hard to support our college Newman Centers and Houses. These are huge support spaces for our young Catholic men and women as they navigate daily challenges of the secular college world. For many of them the Newman Houses are the only Catholic contact that they will have while at college. Be sure to thank the Priests, men and women who dedicate their time to being there to help our young Catholic kids to strengthen their faith while being away from home. If you have any questions, contact me at bbwolf1955@gmail.com or 308-631-6170.

Vivat Jesus,
Bob Wolf, PSD
State Vocations Chairman



News from the **NEIL PFEIFER AGENCY**

Knights of Columbus Insurance Serving Northeast Nebraska and West Central Iowa

Fantastic!
Agents of the Month

May
Brian Ford
Omaha



June
Brian Ford
Omaha



July
Noah Pfeifer
Norfolk

Updated Founders Award Requirement

While the Knights of Columbus is known for its many charitable works and gives more to charity than all other fraternal organizations, Blessed McGivney's primary purpose in founding our Order was the care and protection of Catholic families.

So much so that establishing the insurance division of the Knights of Columbus was nearly his sole focus until his early death at age 38. Given that, it is important that all members of the Knights of Columbus know of the insurance, financial, and service benefits they and their families have access to through the Knights of Columbus.

To that end, the new requirement for the Founder's Award encourages councils to have associate members who do not have coverage with the Knights of Columbus to meet with their advisor to complete an analysis of their situation. It is through this process that they will be made aware of the programs they have access to through their membership and determine if there is anything that the Knights can provide that will help protect their families both now and in the future.

The requirement for qualifying for the Founder's Award is quite simple: councils must have 10% of their associate membership meet with their advisor to complete a financial analysis. The maximum number of council members that must meet with their field agent is 15 for councils with larger associate membership numbers and 5 for councils with lower associate membership numbers.

Councils who wish to attain this award should notify the advisor who services their council that they want to qualify for this award. It is also very helpful for the council to encourage their members to meet with their advisor so that they are aware of the benefits available to them.

As always, the Pfeifer and Swanson agencies are eager to partner with our councils to help them attain this award.

As Supreme Knight Kelly and State Deputy Schaeffer have emphasized, the fraternal and insurance divisions of the Knights of Columbus are the two lungs of the Order that must breathe together so that Blessed McGivney's mission for the Knights of Columbus can be fulfilled.

Vivat Jesu!

Are You Considering a Rewarding Career?

Are you a Catholic gentleman who has an entrepreneurial spirit, is hard-working, and desires helping his Brother Knights and their families secure their financial futures? If so, a career with the Knights offers many financial and intangible rewards.

To learn more, please call 402-640-1239, Ext. 1, and leave a message.

Let's explore if a career with the Knights might be a fit for you!

Neil Pfeifer, General Agent for Northwest Nebraska and West Central Iowa
402.640.1239 ext. 1 | neil.pfeifer@kofc.org | www.neilpfeiferagencykofcins.com

News from the **TONY SWANSON AGENCY**

Knights of Columbus Insurance Serving Southeast, Central and Western Nebraska

Updated Founders Award Requirement

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Vivat Jesu!

Are You Looking for a Rewarding Career?

A career with the Knights offers many financial and intangible rewards for the Catholic gentleman who has an entrepreneurial spirit, is hard-working, and desires helping his Brother Knights and their families secure their financial futures.

If you are curious, please call 800-733-8980, Ext. 5, and leave a message.

We would be happy to see if a career with the Knights might be a fit for you!

Tony Swanson, General Agent for Southeast, Central and Western Nebraska
402.463.2845 ext. 1 | anthony.swanson@kofc.org | www.swansonagencykofcins.com

Great Job!
Agents of the Month

May
Ian Johnstone
Lincoln



June
Aaron Schock
Grand Island



July
Mike Scholz
Loomis



Be sure to follow the Nebraska Knights of Columbus on Facebook, Instagram and X and at **www.nebraskakofc.org**

Charity

Unity

Fraternity

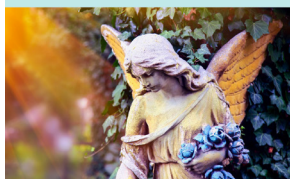
Patriotism



KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS
NEBRASKA
STATE COUNCIL
PO Box 98
Elkhorn, NE 68022

27,000+ MEMBERS STRONG!

FAITH



Hope



LOVE



**CULTURE
OF LIFE**



OCTOBER

**ST. ROBERT
BELLARMINE
PARISH**

11802 PACIFIC ST.
OMAHA, NE 68154

KEY DATES

Mandatory Council Dates

Councils that have not submitted Form 185*#, 365*# and/or Annual Audit (1295#) for period ending June 30 are late. Grand Knight and Financial Secretary are responsible for ensuring compliance.

Complete and Submit ASAP

When event is completed: Form 10784 Fraternal Programs Report Form

September 15: District Deputy Report

October 10: Supreme Semiannual Per Capita, etc. Due

January 31: Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity

January 31: Special Olympics (Use 10784)

State Officers and Directors

January 10: Inputs for the February 2026 Courier Newsletter

Meeting Dates

December 4-6: Mid-Year Meeting, Kearney, NE

* Submit electronically using Member Management under Council Administration.

A copy of this mandatory report shall be emailed (preferred) to:

kofcmvaughn@gmail.com or mailed to: Mike Vaughn, Executive Secretary
1609 Hedgeapple Rd., Plattsmouth, NE 68048, instead of the State Deputy.